



Albury Heath and Blackheath

Distance: 7 km=4¼ miles or 4½ km=2¾ miles

easy walking

Region: Surrey

Date written: 18-jul-2009

Author: Schwebefuss

Date revised: 3-feb-2015

Refreshments: Little London

Last update: 28-aug-2020

Map: Explorer 145 (Guildford) *but the maps in this guide should be sufficient*

Problems, changes? We depend on your feedback: feedback@fancyfreewalks.org

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Woodland trails, villages, hills, views

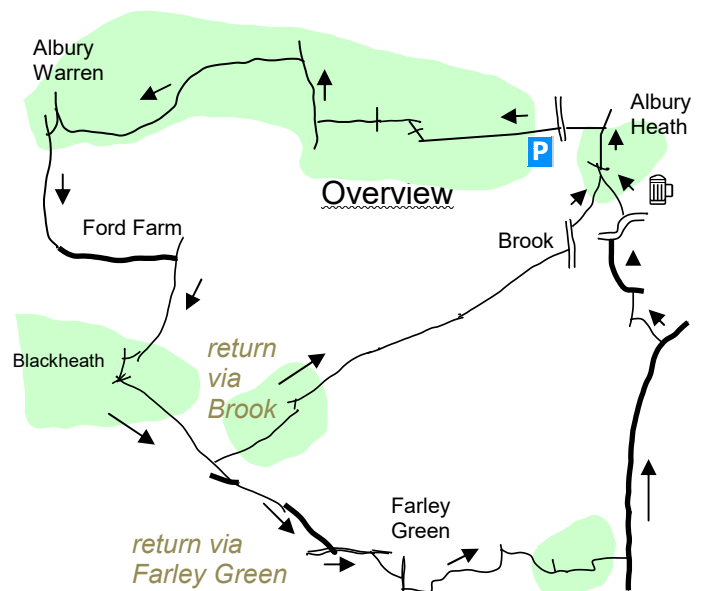
In Brief

This circular walk starts in Albury Heath, Surrey, and takes you along unmarked and unmapped paths to Blackheath, then back by a choice of route. It is ideal on a bright winter's day when the pine trees hold their green and the heath glistens in silvery dew.



This walk is on-the-whole a *dry* walk with little mud, except possibly in the horse pastures just before Little London, which you can bypass. This makes it an excellent *winter walk*. There are few nettles and brambles. Your dog is welcome on this walk.

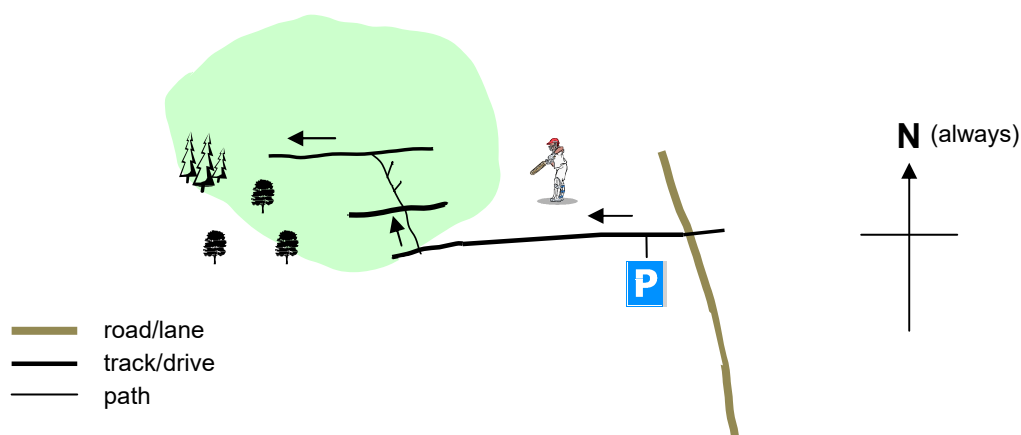
The walk begins just off New Road (i.e. the main road) through **Albury Heath, Surrey, postcode GU5 9DB**, in a car park just south of the cricket pitch. (This is a new starting point, developed in 2019, together with a new better ending.) Going south, you will see a white post marked **Woodside**. Turn **right** here on a track and immediately park on the **left** in a small car park. There is more parking further down the track. If all spaces are taken by cricket fans, park in one of the villages. For full details, see at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).



The Walk

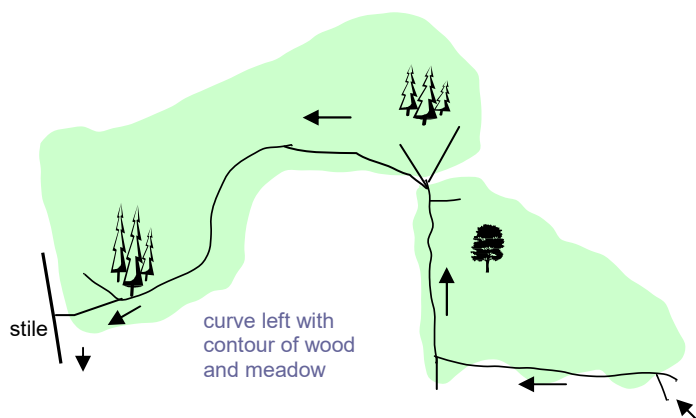
Outward Leg 3 km=2 miles

- 1 From the car park, turn **left** on the track, passing the cricket pitch on your right, with the heather of Albury Heath, and soon a large wooden sculpture, on your left. At the far edge of the cricket pitch, the track enters thick woodland. After 50m, under a large oak, turn **right** on a narrow path (*not*



the sunken path which leaves at an angle 5m further on). (*Further along the track - not on your route - is a group of houses, one of which is "Fircroft", a delightful rambling house and an occasional venue for arts fairs. For details see www.fircroft.info.)* Keep to the main twisty path until, in 30m, you meet a tarmac drive. Continue straight over, always staying close to a large hollow on your left. At the end of the hollow, where you meet a much wider path, turn **left** on it.

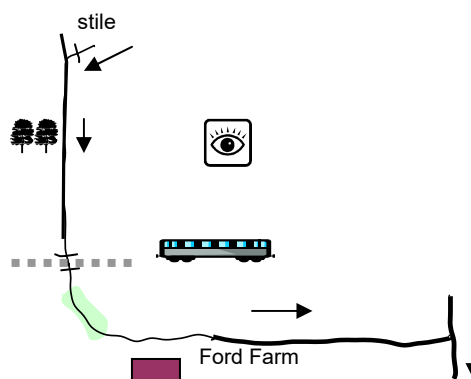
- 2 At first there are overhead wires on your left. Keep them on your left, avoiding a branch-off. In about 150m, the path goes over a crossing path and leads down through conifers towards a green field with a fence ahead. Turn **right** before the fence. *As a general guide, you will be walking round three sides of this large meadow, always in the woods, to the high pasture on the other side.* Stay on this unmarked path for about 150m with good open



views on your left and, on the right, the mixed woods of Albury Warren. At a corner of a wire fence, keep straight ahead ignoring a path right. In only 30m you are in a forest of tall pines with paths going uphill straight ahead. Fork **left** and immediately fork **left** again, staying close to the meadow on your left. In 200m [2015:by a large fallen tree] the main path turns right uphill.

Avoid this turn by keeping **left** on a narrow path so as to stay near the meadow. In about 50m your path bends left to follow the outline of a corner of the meadow. There are more fine views across to Blackheath. In 100m, at the top of a rise, your path forks. Take the **left** fork, the narrower option, avoiding the right fork into pine trees. In 50m, this path leads you over a stile into the open meadow. Turn **left** on a bridleway.

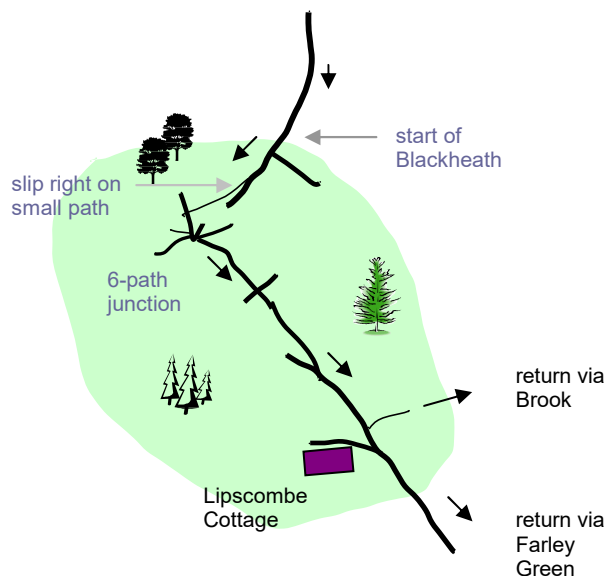
- 3 Go down the long meadow staying about 20m from the right hand side, passing a group of trees on the right and reaching a railway crossing. Cross the railway line carefully. Continue ahead down a small sunken avenue of hazel, through a metal gate, and follow the path **left** beside the lovely isolated period farmhouse of Ford Farm, going through a gate to a gravel track. Keep straight ahead on the track past a converted barn and past on the right what used long ago to be water-cress beds. The track bends right, and then comes to a sharp left bend. **Leave** the track at this left bend by turning sharp **right** instead onto a sandy bridleway.



Ford Farm in winter colours



- 4 The bridleway runs for just over 400m along a sunken track and finally comes to a junction of paths by a post as it enters the wooded expanse of Blackheath. There are wide paths left and straight ahead. Take the wide sunken path **straight ahead**, but immediately **leave** the sunken path by veering off **right** on a narrow rising dry path. The path levels out and runs through bracken to a T-junction. Turn **left**. In 30m, you reach a junction of six paths (plus numerous small ones). The *first* path from the left is the



sunken path you were on. The *second* path from the left is a footpath marked with an arrow. Avoiding

both of these, take the **third** path from the left, a broad sandy horse track, exactly ninety degrees to your original direction. In about 150m, the track goes over a crossing track. It then joins a wider track coming from the right by a seat. Soon the track reaches a 1-bar wooden (possibly open) barrier looking down on the enchanting *Lipscombe Cottage*. (See the walk *Shere Heath and The Hurtwood* for a picture.)

Blackheath in
winter sun



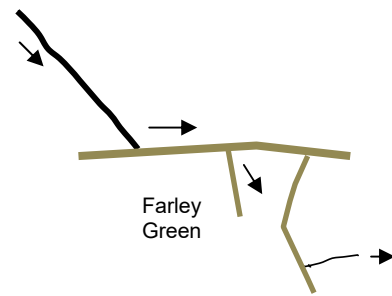
Here you have a choice.


Return via Farley Green takes a varied route back, visiting a pretty village and some contrasting landscapes.

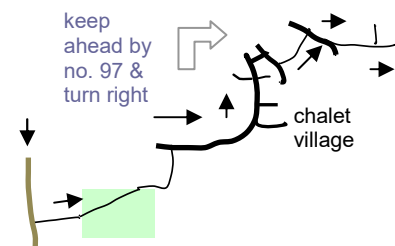
Return via Brook is the shorter return leading you across the fields directly back to Albury Heath.

Return via Farley Green 3½ km=2 miles

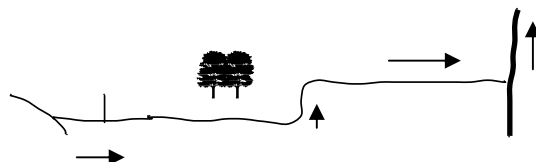
- 1 Continue down the track and turn **left** on the unmade road that runs past *Lipscombe Cottage* and follow it for ½ km to the road at Farley Green. Turn **left** on the road passing timbered *Greenacres* and, on reaching the triangular green, turn **right** along the sandy path across the right hand edge of the green. On reaching the road at the other side, turn **right** and veer **left** with the road. Just 10m after the end of the green, immediately after the entrance to the long tile-hung house, *Medlar Cottage*, turn **left** on a signposted footpath. (Care! the footpath sign is well-hidden by a clipped hedge.)



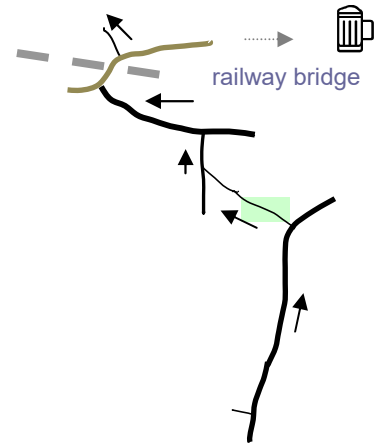
- 2  The path reaches a swing-gate and a horse paddock. Head just to the left of some sheds in the corner. [July 2020: there was a temporary ribbon fence: author simply lifted the handle; it was not electric.] Go through another wooden swing gate and follow the fenced path round the field, eventually reaching a swing-gate and an impeccable chalet village. Turn **right** at a fingerpost and keep right on the tarmac drive which immediately curves left. The route through the chalet village is labyrinthine but there are yellow arrows to point the way. Follow the drive for 100m and stay with it as it curves left again and goes slightly downhill. Keep straight on, ignoring side junctions, until you pass the large **chalet 97** where the main drive veers away left. **Leave** the drive here, as directed by a yellow arrow, by going straight on. In 20m, at a T-junction, turn **right**. Go to the corner of the drive and turn **left** at a 2-way fingerpost on a narrow path between fences. On reaching another drive, turn **right** for 15m and take a footpath straight ahead next to a wooden fence, going through a swing gate.



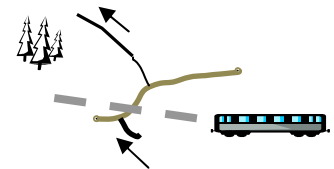
- 3 Immediately, at a signpost, ignore the path left and carry straight on. There are fine views on this path, first left to the North Downs and soon right also. The path goes through a grove of trees all of which are thickly coated with vines and then runs over a robust footbridge. It then zigzags left-right and finally takes you over an unneeded stile under huge yew trees onto the broad ancient byway known as Ponds Lane. Turn **left**.



- 4 Ignore a footpath on the right along the way. After about 500m, where the byway is on a right curve, look out for an opening in the trees on the **left** with a metal farm gate and a hidden stile [Aug 2020: blocked by a huge fallen tree: you may need to make a detour on the right up a steep bank]. (If the fields here are very muddy because of horses, or if you have a dog, or if you wish to avoid four stiles, you can avoid them by continuing further along the byway and turning **left** on a footpath through the farm buildings, or even continuing to the railway crossing and going across Shere Heath, veering left to the *William IV pub*.) Go over the stile (the first of four) and, after 10m in the meadow, go over a stile on the **right** into the next meadow. Cut across the corner to another stile. Keep the same direction in the next larger pasture to a stile in the corner, go down to a track and turn **right** on it. At a T-junction, turn **left** onto a tarmac farm lane. The lane soon reaches the road called Little London. Turn **right** on the road.



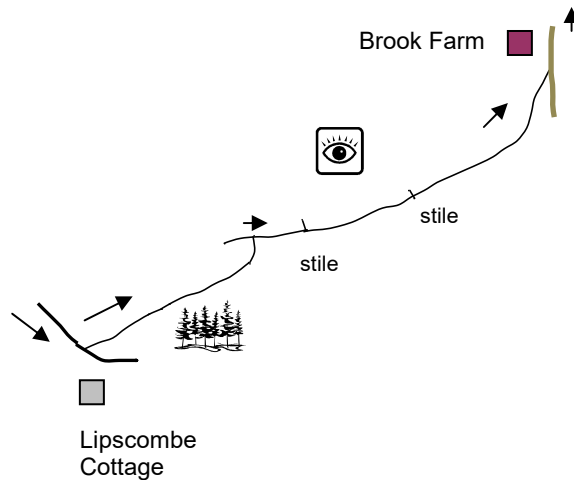
- 5 The road goes under a railway arch. The *William IV pub* is a short distance along this road, requiring only a small diversion from your route. Immediately after the arch, take a signed footpath **left**. The path runs beside a garden and reaches Albury Heath. Keep straight ahead on the main stony and sandy track.



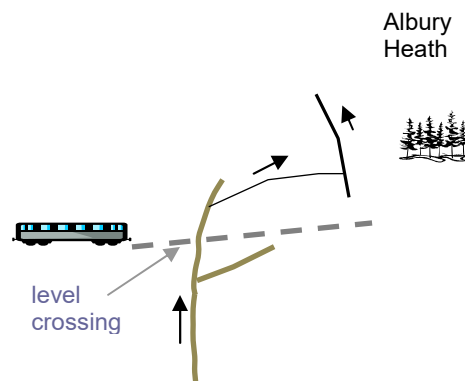
Now skip forward → to the last section called Shared Ending.

Return via Brook 1½ km=1 mile

- 1 Immediately after the 1-bar barrier and before you reach the cottage, take a narrow signed footpath **left**. This path is also marked as part of the *Fox Way*. Follow the path up to an unneeded stile and go straight ahead through pinewoods. At the end, go over a crossing path and through bracken and at a T-junction turn **right** to go through a metal gate into a large meadow. You now have a fine view of the North Downs with the hamlet of Brook ahead. Follow the wide fenced path between several horse pastures. Where the hedge on the left finally ends, join a farm track leading to the road. Turn **left** on the road. The road passes Brook Farm on the left with its magnificent redbrick house.

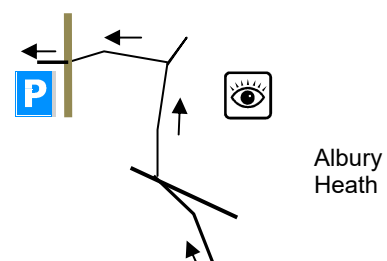


- 2 Ignore a road forking right and continue over a level crossing. Immediately after the crossing, turn **right** on a narrow path between banks. Once out of the thick bracken, keep straight ahead across the lovely mossy space till you meet a wide crossing path by a brick shed. Turn **left** on this path.



Shared Ending 1½ km=1 mile

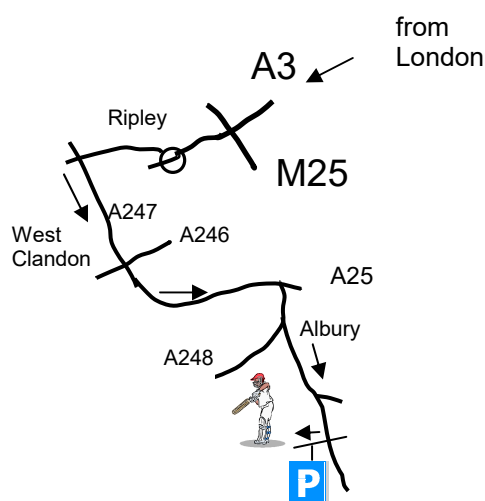
After 100m or so on this track, you come to a junction where another even wider track joins at a sharp angle from the right. Veer **right** here to cross the wide track, between thick stumps onto a narrower woodland path. You have woodland on your left and the open heath on your right. In 200m, the path has risen to an open area with two seats and views across Albury Heath to a few houses. Turn sharp **left** here on a wide woodland path. Your path lead out to the main road. Cross straight over, back to the parking area where the walk began.



Getting there

By car: To get to Albury Heath there from the London area, take the A3 and, after crossing the M25, exit at the next major junction at a sign for Ripley. Take the B2215, signposted Woking, through Ripley and, 2 miles=3 km after the village, turn left at a roundabout on the A247 signposted West Clandon. After 2 miles=3 km, pass West Clandon Church and the entrance to Clandon Park and cross over the A246 dual carriageway, signposted Dorking. Pass the car park for Newlands Corner. There are terrific views on the right.

After the road, Shere Road, becomes a dual carriageway, slip into the right lane and take the A248 right, signposted *Godalming and Albury*. At a junction where the A248 bends sharp right, turn left (really straight ahead) on a road signposted *Albury Heath, Farley Green, Peaslake*. Go past a road junction on the left and carry on for another 150m (just over 150 yds) to where you meet a horse track that crosses the road by a white post with a sign for *Woodside*. Turn **right** on the track and immediately **left** into the car park. There is more parking further down the track if need be.



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